

LUTHER et al.
10/675,352
Page 2

REMARKS

The Examiner maintains that the application contains five (5) patentably distinct species of the *claimed* invention and that Applicants are required to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is final held to be allowable. The Examiner further maintains that "[c]urrently, no claim appears generic." See Office Action at page 2. In response to the restriction requirement, Applicants hereby elect without traverse the species of the invention identified by the Examiner as:

Species A, Embodiment 1, drawn towards an optical connector disclosed in paragraph 035, line 1, comprising at least one force centering element.

for further prosecution on the merits and assert that currently *all of the claims in the application* (i.e., claims 1-35) are readable on the elected species. More specifically, *all* of the claims of the application are directed towards a fiber optic connector comprising a multifiber ferrule and at least one force centering element for applying a biasing force to the ferrule. In particular, claims 1, 21 and 22 each recite a fiber optic connector comprising a multifiber ferrule and at least one force centering element. In claims 2-4, the at least one force centering element is formed by the rearward portion of the spring seat. In claims 5-8 and 12-14, the at least one force centering element is formed by the forward portion of the spring seat. In claims 9-11, 15-20, 26, 28-30 and 32-35, the at least one force centering element is formed by the ferrule (e.g., rear face or ferrule body medially between the end face and the rear face). In claims 23-25 and 27, the at least one force centering element is formed by a combination of the coil spring and the spring seat. In claim 31, first and second force centering elements are formed by a combination of the spring seat and the ferrule. Applicants further point out that *none* of the claims recite the pin keeper feature. Thus, it is not understood how Species B and Species C identified by the Examiner can be patentably distinct species of the *claimed* invention. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is generic to all species of the *claimed* invention, and that each of claims 1-35 is readable upon the elected Species A, Embodiment 1.

LUTHER et al.
10/675,352
Page 3

This response being fully responsive to the Office Action, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for examination on the merits, and the undersigned respectfully solicits such action on their behalf.

This response does not result in more independent or total claims than paid for previously. Accordingly, no fee for excess claims is due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any other fee due in connection with the filing of this response to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If an extension of time not already accounted for is required with this response, Applicants hereby petition for such extension of time and the Examiner is likewise authorized to charge the petition fee to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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